

March 2003

Dear Citizens of Redmond and Members of the City Council:

This 2003-2004 biennial budget serves as a record of promises kept and of our future commitment to the community on the services citizens can expect. In this way, it marks the City's progress in accomplishing many of the goals of the past biennium and presents workplan priorities for the next two-year period. The budget outlines the financial framework for our efforts and is a key tool we use to build and maintain a high quality of life in Redmond. It also provides an important context for our current efforts to update the City's Comprehensive Plan, which is used as the policy guide to achieve the long-term preferred vision for the future of our community.

To gauge citizen satisfaction with basic services and to assess where further resources may be needed, the City conducted its third biennial statistical survey prior to the budget development process. This survey focused on identifying residents' priorities and customer service concerns to assist City staff in developing a budget that reflects community needs. By building on similar efforts conducted prior to previous budgets, the City is establishing a track record that helps to evaluate how well we are doing over time in responding to the issues most important to our citizens. These and future surveys, along with other ongoing forms of formal and informal communications, will guide our continuing efforts to reassess the work we do, to measure performance, and to adapt to changing community needs.

Given these lean economic times, most of our budget resources are dedicated to simply maintaining essential City operations. The only new initiatives proposed are in the public safety area with anti-terrorism training for our police officers and further technology enhancements to continue our efficiency improvements efforts. Beyond these targeted areas, we will continue to focus on the priorities our citizens have consistently reiterated are most important to them within the limited means we have available. These include efforts to partner with schools and businesses to meet community needs, improve mobility options, demonstrate stewardship of the environment, enhance communications with residents, and continue the City's commitment to its youth.

While I am presenting a balanced budget for FY 2003-04, it is important to highlight the considerable efforts that went into this proposal, as well as the underlying assumptions and other potential future impacts. I have worked hard with staff to reduce the City's costs, especially in those service areas where the associated revenues are down. The budget includes these reductions, together with other cost containment measures in the area of employee benefits, system efficiencies and other process improvements. While the City's fundamentals remain strong, we will need to keep a watchful eye on initiatives and other future developments which have the potential to greatly change the City's financial picture in the coming years.

Also consistent with our prior biennial budget, past accomplishments and future workplan priorities are presented in the context of the City's six Strategic Directions following this letter. These Strategic Directions emerged from a series of conversations among the elected and appointed leaders of Redmond City government and intensive work by a dedicated group of City employees. Related efforts that formed the foundation for Strategic Directions included the City's workplace values, the vision statement, and the City Council's principles to sustain a healthy community. These are summarized here on the pages following the discussion of Strategic Directions.

In closing, we are working hard to build and maintain ***Redmond, a community of good neighbors***, as our vision states. We have achieved much and received national recognition for our many efforts to keep and improve upon our community's quality of life. The success of the next two years depends on the ability of us all to commit to this shared vision and to work to make it happen. While the budget presents the fiscal overview of our efforts, it is only one of the ways in which we demonstrate this commitment. As we continue to work with the community on the Downtown Transportation Master Plan and the update to our Comprehensive Plan over the next biennium, we can further assess our progress in realizing this vision and rechart our course to ensure the sustainability of our community. I invite your comments, questions and suggestions about these issues and the services we provide. You can contact me by telephone at (425) 556-2101, fax (425) 556-2110, or email at mayor@ci.redmond.wa.us.

Sincerely,

Rosemarie M. Ives
Mayor